

A POEM FOR THE BOSS

You ask me into your office.
I sit in the chair, nervously
crossing my legs, touching my beard.
When you hand me my raise
and shake my hand, you think
this is a wonderful moment for me,
but it isn't.

Listening to your praise
is as disturbing to me
as if you were firing me
or chewing my ass out.

I do not mean to do good work.
I do not strive for it. It's merely
how I get through each day.

Ultimately I will fail you,
I will let you down. Not
through the quality of my work,
but because I do not want
the same things you do.

I do not share your lust for profits.
I only want to see the sun go down
everyday. I wait for that moment
when the car is in the garage,
the gate is shut, dinner is cooking,
the moon is huge and orange over the roofs
and I am free again for a few hours.

POOR

I remember times
we were so broke
I would steal rolls of toilet paper
out of the crappers at work,
stomp them flat and
stuff them in my attache case.

and still
we buy half our meals
at the gas station,
charging cheese and milk,
bread and wine on the
ARCO card, paying
double price for outdated
goods, and the oriental
clerks leering at us
like we were purple
negroes from jupiter.

it goes on and on
without relief, never
a time when we have
more than five dollars
to spend at the Alpha Beta.
this poverty would
drive any normal person
mad, I wonder how
we take it.

I go for weeks on end
without a single dollar bill
in my wallet, yet I know
men who feel oppressed
if they haven't got
four or five hundred a month
to blow on the races or
taking girls to Motel 6.

LUNCH TIME

I'm listening to opera
and eating a turkey sandwich
white turkey breast, sourdough
bread, mayo, lettuce. It's
probably the best turkey sandwich
I've ever had. A minute ago

the boss stuck his head in
and asked if I've written
any pornographic novels lately.
I explained that it takes time
to get a long fictional work
into publishable form, years,
but that I have had some luck
lately with the poetry,
a collection forthcoming, some
stuff in an anthology out of
Nevada. He in turn said that
he's got a video machine
and watches porno movies at home,
as if somehow that puts us
on an equal footing as artists.

It's fall again, September 3rd,
my mind wanders aimlessly and
once again squares of paper
blow through the air while
I daydream of nirvana.